

CHOIRDOM'S ANNUAL MOVING TAKES PLACE TO-DAY

Yearly Contracts of All Noted Singers in All Noted Churches Become Operative the First May Sunday—An Army of 25,000 Men and Women in Greater New York and Suburbs Earn Salaries Interpreting Sacred Music

FROM time immemorial the first Sunday in May has been moving day in chirdom. All yearly contracts for services are operative on that date and all engagements are reckoned from this Sunday May day. In the unwritten history of metropolitan church choirs there is a story to the effect that years ago one of New York's church congregations built a new edifice and moved in on the first Sunday in May. To make the change as complete as possible the music committee engaged a new choir. The old singers applied for positions in a rival church and were engaged. Other congregations followed suit and soon it became the established custom to make all changes in the choir lofts on "the Church May day."

It has been recently estimated by one who had every opportunity of knowing and who had no possible reason for exaggeration that in Greater New York and the surrounding suburbs there is an army of nearly if not quite 25,000 persons who provide a part at least of their living expenses out of what they bring into the family exchequer by the use of their musical talents once a week at public worship in church or temple. A large proportion of these 25,000 persons look forward to this May day renewal or lapse of their yearly incomes with respective joy or dread. It means expansion or curtailment to all—to some an extra glimpse at the opera or a few more suppers—to others existence or want or

institutions under the supervision of the Cathedral. On these occasions the organ is supplemented by a full orchestra of strings, wood winds and brasses. The Cathedral has always been the home of brilliant musical services. Up to the time of the Papal request in 1904 that women voices should not be heard in the church, both the quartet and chorus were famous. Katherine Hilke was soprano soloist for many years, and before she went to Europe to study for the operatic stage Olive Fremstad was the solo contralto. The chancel choir of sixty boys—drilled by M. Ungerer and under his direction for eleven years—adds much to the effectiveness of the service. Especially has this been true since the elevation of his Excellency the former Archbishop Farley to the Cardinalate.

St. Bartholomew's choir, called the highest priced choir in the United States, is mourning for its lost tenor, Mr. Lambert Murphy, who has succumbed to the lure of the Metropolitan Opera House stage. Mr. Murphy was a Springfield boy and had sung in Massachusetts in various capacities and positions before he came to New York and immediately won for himself a place among the best church tenors. His position has not yet been filled. In order to guard against any further losses in the ranks of this unique band of vocalists the church has retained the other members of the quartet with new contracts, adding to the annual check of the soprano soloist, Miss Grace Kerns, several hundred dollars and thus making

church with orchestra and double organ. The piece de resistance for this year's service is to be the St. Mary's mass in C, given in America for the first time with full orchestral accompaniment. The score for the orchestra was on the ill fated

Miss Grace Kerns,
St. Bartholomew's



Miss Bertha Kinzel new
Soprano, West Park
Presbyterian Church

Brewer celebrates this thirty-third year at this church this morning. The chorus of thirty-five voices does excellent work. This is the church where Dr. Cuyler preached for so many years. Among the other important changes

Miss Maud
Morgan,
Harpist,
Grace
Church



Floyd Scott Neely, Jr., Choir Boy at
Grace Church

Old St. Mark's "in the Bouerie" will suffer a loss to-day in the absence of its old choir leader, J. C. Dempsey. Jack Dempsey, one of the most popular choir leaders in New York, has resigned after twenty-one consecutive years of what his friends call "hard labor." Mr. Dempsey's baton is as long if not so pointed as that used by Herr Nikisch at his recent concert in Carnegie Hall. At every weekly rehearsal and at every Sunday service for 1,082 weeks, without a single break on account of sickness or any other adversity, this baton has waved over the leader's desk in the front of the organ loft, a desk, by the way, nearly as large as that made for Conductors Hertz at the Metropolitan for the manuscript of "Mona," and at every service the bass voice of the leader has been heard in hymn and anthem. As Mr. Dempsey tendered his resignation the new rector was heard to say: "You have been rector of this church for over twenty years. Now perhaps the real rector may be permitted to exercise his functions. I congratulate you upon your popularity." The organist, Willis Alling, remains, as do the other members of the present choir. Miss Curtis, on tour with the Russian Symphony Orchestra, is the solo soprano, and Miss Charlotte St. John Elliott is taking her place while she is away. The choir numbers thirty.

At the Madison Avenue Baptist Church a new tenor comes from the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn. Thomas Morgan Phillips, Bruno Huhn, organist, remains with the choir as it stood last year with this exception. Mrs. Florence Haight is the soprano. Mrs. Morrell Alcock the contralto and Lyman Chary the basso.

To fill the vacancy made by the departure of Mr. Phillips John Hyatt Brower, organist of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, has engaged Emory Randolph, a new tenor of promise. The other solo voices in this choir are Miss Elizabeth Tudor, soprano; Miss Mary Jordan, contralto, and Edwin O. Swain, basso, 73r.

in Brooklyn churches is that made by the resignation of A. G. Robyn, who for years has been connected with the Tompkins Avenue Congregational Church. Mr. Robyn resigned last week, giving as his reason his desire to devote his entire time to the opera and opera companies upon which he is at work. His place was tendered to William G. Hammond, who has just closed his ninth year as organist of the First Reformed Church, Seventh avenue and Carroll street, but Mr. Hammond declined the offer as he had decided to go abroad to further his work in operatic composition. He goes to Italy, taking his wife, former contralto soloist at the Tompkins Avenue church.

At the Unitarian Church of the Saviour, Brooklyn Heights, an entirely new choir will sing to-day. The organist is William K. Kraft, from St. John's Episcopal Church, Yonkers; the soprano, Mrs. Bessie Clark Branson; the contralto, Miss Marguerite Dunlap; the tenor, G. S. Tomlin, and the basso, Francis Rogers, one of New York's best known concert singers, and who has been heard at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine with great pleasure for the past two years.

For the West End Presbyterian Church at the Tompkins Avenue church, Charles B. Hawley has been engaged as organist and choirmaster. Mr. Hawley takes with him three of the members of his choir from the Madison Avenue Methodist Church. Miss Edna Smith, his soprano, is one of the highest priced soloists in the city; Bechtel Alcock, his tenor, is a rival of the better known concert tenors; and his basso, William Tucker, is as pleasing in concert as in choir work. The contralto, Mrs. Lillian Brown, remains from the former regime. As Dr. Keigwin, the pastor of the West End church, preached to 2,000 persons at each service the new choir will have the opportunity of speedily making as many friends in their new surroundings as they left in the old.

The big vested choir of ninety at the Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church, at 129th street and Seventh avenue, will

Choir of Chapel
of St. Cornelius
the
Centurion
at Governor's
Island which
sang at General
Frederick Dent Grant's
Funeral

take on a new lease of life with the new choir of soloists which will be added to-day by the organist, A. E. Patterson. Miss May Gawane, the contralto, comes from the Church of the Disciples, Eighty-first street and Central Park West; George W. Ballard, the tenor, and J. D. Thomas, basso, are also newcomers; the soprano, Mrs. Mildred Graham Reardon, is the only soloist who was with the old choir.

The Central Congregational Church of Brooklyn, where Dr. S. Parkes Cadman preaches, will start the new year to-day with this choir: Organist, Frederick Preston; soprano, Mrs. Shannah Cummings Jones; contralto, Miss India Waelchli; tenor, Arthur S. Clough; and basso, A. Duncan Cornwall. Mr. Preston will conduct a chorus of fifty voices.

At the Madison Avenue Reformed Church, better known as Dr. Kittredge's, although Dr. Kittredge is now pastor emeritus, all of the choir have left but the organist and basso. Mrs. Lucy Marsh Gordon, soprano; Mrs. Marion Vanduy, contralto, and Mr. John S. Macdonald, tenor, have sought church work elsewhere. Their places will not be filled until the fall. Charles A. Baker, organist, and George A. Fleming, basso, remain.

At the two principal synagogues in Manhattan, Temple Beth-El, at Seventy-

on Manhattan Island. Three of the instrumental body are members of the New York Philharmonic Society. Messrs. Smith and Burke, violins, and Mr. Kavarik, viola. Carl Beyer is the double bass. The remainder of the band are not so noted, but they are all paid professionals and all members of "St. Mary's Choir." In the orchestra are eight strings, four wood winds and four brasses besides the kettle drums that used to startle the churchgoers when first introduced by Dr. Prentice.

Dr. Gerrit Smith will begin the new year to-day with his new surplined choir in the new South Church at Eighty-fifth street and Park avenue. This new edifice has probably the finest room for music among the churches in greater New York. Seventy feet in height, narrow and long, with walls and roof of stone and floor of tiles, the church makes an ideal auditorium especially for the choral work to which Dr. Smith will in large measure confine his choir. For to-day his choir will number but thirty voices. Later these will be added to until the full fifty shall have been selected.

A true type of the church militant is the chapel of St. Cornelius the Centurion on Governors Island. Ever since the island was fortified in 1776 there has been some kind of a chapel attached to it. When in 1866 the island ceased to be an army post for which chaplains were commissioned, Trinity Church asked and obtained permission to furnish a priest at its own expense and has done so ever since. Called the "Garrison Chapel," the services are conducted with military precision and the choir ranks are recruited from the men and boys available on the island. Sergeant O'Keefe is the sexton of the church and appears in full uniform with the boys in their surplices, and the seats are filled with the officers and men in full military uniforms. The last public service of the choir was the singing at the funeral of Gen. Frederick Dent Grant. Among the boys in the choir



Miss Elsie Davis
new Soprano
at Temple
Emanuel

sixth street and Temple Emanuel at Forty-third street, the choirs for the various services on Friday, Saturday and Sunday will remain practically the same. At the Temple Beth-El the cantor, the Rev. Bernhard Steinberg, has been engaged for a concert tour of Europe and will sing in London, Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Rome and Jerusalem while he is away. At Emanuel-El Miss Inez Barbour returns for the regular services. During her four months absence in Europe Miss Elsie Davis has been substituting in her place.

New Soprano Comes To-day.
A new soprano comes to-day to the Central Presbyterian Church on Fifty-seventh street, Mrs. E. F. Sterling. The other members of the choir are: Miss Helen Neibuh, contralto; Delos Becker, tenor; and Andrea Sarto, basso. Harry M. Gilbert, organist, leaves the organ in the hands of his former assistant, William T. Rutherford. This choir has the service of the Kallenborn String Quartet on special occasions.

One of the most interesting choirs in the city is that of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin. Forty years ago Dr. George Prentice fought for and gained an enviable place among the choirs of New York, presenting the choirs of and imposing musical services outside the Roman Catholic Church. To-day Walter S. Fleming takes his place, carrying on the work with a faithfulness born of an earnest desire to keep St. Mary's in her proper niche and a devotion to the traditions of the choir to which his predecessor gave up his entire life. Mr. Fleming's "choir" includes more than a body of singers; the instrumentalists are as much a part of the body musical as are the choristers, a feature that will be found elsewhere

are and have been the sons of many officers stationed on the island. Gen. Leonard Wood's son Osborne, Col. Allison's son Malcolm, Major Dickson's two boys Tracy and Abbot, Col. Cronkhite's son Alexander, have all been members of this choir militant, which, by the way, has one of the finest ball teams in the surrounding counties. Capt. Arthur Halpin, the organist and choir director, is a great boy lover and has the affection and esteem of every one who has been connected with the island since his appointment six years ago.

No one instrument has augmented the organ at church services with such effectiveness as has the harp—no harpist is so well known among the city's church singers and churchgoers as Miss Maud Morgan, who continues to "assist" George W. Helfenstein at Grace Church. The choir here consists of thirty-four boys and men. The work done by this church is much more than that of preparing the singers for their Sunday services. At the choir house at 88 Fourth avenue there is carried on a complete boys' school, to which the choir boys are welcome. Twenty of the boys live at this house. The others are day scholars.

The Brick Presbyterian Church has in its organist and choir director, Clarence Dickinson, one of the strictest of disciplinarians. His choir is small—two solo quartets and a chorus of sixteen—but all are paid, and the chorus is reorganized every fall, when even the old organists are obliged to sing on trial. The only changes here are the solo tenor of the first quartet, Charles Harrison, who takes the place of Reed Miller, and Miss Helma Mosler, contralto of the second quartet, who succeeds Miss Gertrude Merritt. The very highest standard is insisted upon in every respect. An orchestra presented each month during the season, among those given last year were Beethoven's "Christmas Oratorio" and Handel's "Messiah."

Miss Edna
Smith
new Soprano Soloist at
West Presbyterian Church

worse. Two million and a half dollars are paid them—or the more fortunate others—for this musical service.

On this first Sunday of May, 1912, there will be more than the usual number of changes—sopranos and tenors asking for more solos and more salary, contraltos and barytones looking for less work and longer vacations and committees demanding the impossible, and getting it. Every year the market seems to be controlled by some particular want; this year the want is tenors. The majority of changes recorded has been made by tenors. A few weeks ago Edward Strong, tenor of the quartet at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, resigned his position to go West. So far the position has not been filled. Mr. Theodore Van York, who for the past six years has been singing the tenor solos at St. Thomas's Church, recently found that his pupils needed him more and more and requested Mr. Macfarlane to find some one else to fill his place. Fortunately for both the church and Mr. Macfarlane, Reed Miller was available and was promptly secured for the place. Mr. Miller has been at the Brick Presbyterian Church for five years. His place has been filled by Charles Harrison.

Mr. Miller will find ideal surroundings at St. Thomas's. As choirmaster William C. Macfarlane has fulfilled all prophecies made for him by his friends when he took charge of the choir twelve years ago. St. Thomas's has long been noted for its music. The edifice, which was destroyed by fire in August, 1905, was opened for worship in October, 1907. For thirty years the music was under the direction of Dr. George William Warren. During this period the choir was composed of quartet and chorus—forty mixed voices. The music was a feature of New York life. Not to have heard Marie Gramma, Emily Winant and Dr. Carl Martin or the strumming of the harp during the singing of Dr. Warren's hymns was considered a lost opportunity for out of town visitors. With the resignation of Dr. Warren came a new boy choir, which has upheld the reputation of the old, and has become noted as one of the foremost boy choirs of the country. Mr. Macfarlane has seventy voices at his command—boys and men. Master Gustav Stahl, soprano soloist for the coming year, has already found a place for himself in the hearts of the St. Thomas parishioners. He takes the place filled by Master Edward Hausberg of last year.

Celebrates 20th Anniversary.

On the other side of the avenue at St. Patrick's Cathedral Choirmaster J. C. Ungerer celebrates his twentieth anniversary to-day, with his perfected male voice choir of ten solo voices. The newly completed list is as follows: J. A. Finnegan, J. C. Brett, William B. McFadden, N. S. Silberstein, A. B. Silberstein, Graham Reed, J. A. Fitzpatrick, William F. Hooley, A. van Gelfen and J. J. O'Connor. No finer a capella work is heard on the avenue. Masses by Rheinberger, Perosi, Adler, Elmer unfamiliar to the average choir singer are favorites of Mr. Ungerer, who has made a study of the quaint and the unusual. On special occasions, high days and festivals, the choir is augmented by the addition of extra men and seventy-five boys, selected from the ranks of the singers from the various

her the highest priced church soloist in the city. Content with nothing but the best St. Bartholomew's has always had good music. A quarter of a century ago, when Carl Walter was the organist and Ella Earle, Hattie Clapper, Theodore Todt and Franz Remmert comprised the solo quartet, the music was admirably sung by the then best obtainable voices. Then came Richard Henry Warren, who augmented the choir with a chorus and finally convinced the trustees of the church that they needed a surplined body of singers. From his work has been developed the present efficient half hundred voices, many of whom are as well paid as soloists in other churches and all loyal to the work demanded, three rehearsals a week and elaborate services. Mr. Arthur S. Hyde, the present choirmaster and organist, is carrying the drilling of the choir to still further perfection. His Sunday afternoon services, with an entire cantata or short oratorio for the anthem, have served to fill the church to more than completion. The unaccompanied carols last Christmas Day will be remembered for a long time to come. Mrs. Jones will remain as solo contralto and Mr. Arthur Weld as basso. Harp and violin add to the effectiveness of the accompaniments of the double organ, especially in the more modern works with which the programmes are filled.

Down at Old Trinity Dr. Victor Baier celebrates to-day his forty-first year of work in the church. In 1871 he came to Mr. Messier as a boy soloist, in 1885 he was made assistant organist—that is, played upon the organ in the loft at the rear of the church—a position he held until the resignation of Mr. Messier in 1897, when he took entire charge of the choir. This gives to the doctor the record for the longest continuance in one church choir in the city. Ever since Sunday morning, March 13, 1898, "Old Trinity" has had continuous services "with music." Six pounds a year was paid to the first church clerk to "set and sing the psalms"—there was no organ in the church until 1741. Four organs have been used in the church since the first was built by John Clemm and played by his son, the present one having been put in by Choirmaster Hodges in 1848. It is to-day one of the finest of instruments. As usual, on Ascension Day Dr. Baier will give a special service in the

Titanic. But fortunately Dr. Baier has some of the parts and is arranging a full score for an orchestra of forty-one pieces, harp and two organs, and promises it for the Ascension Day celebration, on May 26—Trinity's birthday. Boy voices were introduced into Trinity's choir as early as 1844, but there were "women soloists" up to 1859. Since then, however, the boys have reigned supreme. For his special service on Ascension Day Dr. Baier announces some new soloists among his boys.

Elaborate Evening Service Music.

Moved up to the West Side and joined with the Park Presbyterian the choir remained intact. The tenor, William H. Reiger, is still in the choir loft, having seen continuous service with the choir since the days of Clementine de Vere, who sang with him under the preaching of Dr. Paxton. To-day a new soprano comes to the choir in the person of Miss Bertha Kinzel. Miss Kinzel is a St. Joe, Missouri, girl. She has been in Boston for the last few years, singing with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and with nearly all the oratorio societies of the East. Her last church position was solo soprano at the Henry Rogers Memorial Church. At the West Park she takes the place of Miss Anna Case (one of the new sopranos at the Metropolitan Opera House, who goes to the Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn. Mrs. Edna Burgess Nobles, contralto, and Mr. Frederick Gunther, basso, remain in their old positions. Arthur Rose, organist and choirmaster, celebrates his twenty-second year at this church this evening. The music at the evening service is usually elaborate. Selections from some oratorio are sung on the last Sunday of the month. Last Sunday evening selections from Mendelssohn's "Elijah" were given.

The church of the Pilgrims, to which Miss Case goes to-day, is one of the best paying of the Brooklyn churches. Alfred Y. Cornell has been in charge of the music here for the last two years. He retains with him Paul Dufault, tenor, who has sung in this church for fourteen consecutive years, and Clifford Curtis, basso. The contralto position has not yet been filled and may not be until fall. The work done by these young brilliant voices will doubtless continue to please the music lovers of the congregation, of which there are many.